



General Assembly

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19 April 1990

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 364th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 16 April 1990, at 10 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. PERERA

(Sri Lanka)

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The CHAIRMAN declared the session open.

ELECTION OF THE RAPPORTEUR

2. The CHAIRMAN said that he had received a letter from the Permanent Representative of Madagascar recommending that Mr. Noël Rakotondramboa should assume the responsibility of Rapporteur, to replace Mr. Jean Rakotozafy, who had been transferred to another post in the Malagasy Government's service.

3. Mr. Rakotondramboa (Madagascar) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (A/AC.159/L.98)

4. The agenda was adopted.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

5. The CHAIRMAN said he wished to suggest that the following text, which had been adopted in earlier years, should continue to apply in the course of the Ad Hoc Committee's work during 1990.

"It has been decided that the Ad Hoc Committee, in recognition of its preparatory functions, will meet in formal and informal sessions, as it considers appropriate, to complete the organizational and substantive preparatory work relating to the Conference on the Indian Ocean. In doing so, adequate time will be given to both organizational and substantive issues, including the provisional agenda for the Conference, rules of procedure, participation, stages of the Conference, level of representation, documentation, consideration of appropriate arrangements for any international agreements that may ultimately be reached for the maintenance of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace and preparation of the draft final document of the Conference.

"For the consideration of substantive issues, the Committee will take into account, inter alia, the political and security climate in the region and characteristics of the zone as given in documents placed before the Committee or discussed during the session. The Committee will also give consideration to all other documents before it.

"It has been decided further that the open-ended Working Group will continue to meet during the scheduled sessions of the Committee with a mandate to identify, expand and facilitate agreement on substantive issues relating to the establishment of a zone of peace with a view to, inter alia, recommending to the Ad Hoc Committee elements that might be taken into consideration during the subsequent preparation of a draft final document of the United Nations

(The Chairman)

Conference on the Indian Ocean. Meetings of the Committee and the open-ended Working Group will not take place concurrently."

6. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt that text.

7. It was so decided.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

8. The CHAIRMAN said that it was with profound regret that he started the Ad Hoc Committee's first session in 1990. The Permanent Representatives of France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America had addressed letters to the Secretary-General on 6 April 1990 informing him that they were withdrawing from the Committee as of that date. At their request, the texts of those letters would be circulated as documents of the General Assembly under item 63 of the preliminary list of items to be included in the provisional agenda of its forty-fifth regular session. The letters would be available the following day under document symbols: A/45/213 (France), A/45/214 (United States) and A/45/215 (United Kingdom).

9. Further, he regretted to inform the Committee that some other Western European and other States members of the Committee would refrain from attending the meetings at the current session.

10. In the course of the informal consultations that he had held prior to the current session many members of the Committee, while expressing regret at the three States' decision to withdraw from the Committee, had added that it was their wish that all the Western European and other States concerned should participate in the ongoing process in the Committee.

11. France, the United Kingdom and the United States had claimed that one of the factors that had led them to their decision to withdraw had been that the Committee had violated the consensus rule. He could not agree with that. Throughout 1989, the Committee had striven to achieve a consensus on its recommendations to the General Assembly, but discussions in the Committee had been inconclusive. The Committee had therefore decided by consensus that as Chairman he should continue his efforts and conduct informal consultations in order to facilitate the adoption of a resolution at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. In other words, the Committee had agreed by consensus that action should be taken by him, as Chairman, through informal consultations, and by the General Assembly.

12. As was explicit in the Committee's report to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session (A/44/29), the Committee had clearly understood then that its consensus decision to entrust the matter to the General Assembly had been made without prejudice to the decision-making processes of the General Assembly, which was governed by its own rules of procedure. The General Assembly, at its forty-fourth session, had decided to resort to a vote to adopt its resolution on the Indian Ocean.

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(The Chairman)

13. It was his intention, in spite of the recent developments, that the Committee should continue with its work as mandated in General Assembly resolution 44/120, and make further efforts to harmonize views on issues relating to the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean.

PROGRAMME OF WORK

14. The CHAIRMAN read out a tentative programme of work.

15. Mr. HAGOSS (Ethiopia) said that Committee members would need time to analyse the situation resulting from the withdrawal of France, the United Kingdom and the United States and from the decision of several other Western European and other States members of the Committee not to attend meetings. He therefore suggested that informal consultations should be held that afternoon, and that the general debate should begin on 18 April.

16. The CHAIRMAN, responding to a point raised by Mr. JAYASINGHE (Sri Lanka), said that Greece and Australia were the only Western European and other States members of the Committee that were attending the current session. Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Italy and Japan would not be attending.

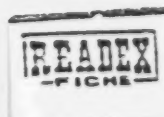
17. Mr. MFULA (Zambia) asked whether the Western European and other States members of the Committee that had decided not to attend the current session had given a reason.

18. Ms. COURTNEY (Australia) said that, as co-ordinator of the group of States in question, she had informed the Chairman of the withdrawal of France, the United Kingdom and the United States and of the non-participation of the other countries, which had not stated any reason for not attending the session.

19. The CHAIRMAN suggested that: informal consultations should be held that afternoon and the following day; the general debate should begin on Wednesday, 18 April; agenda item 5 should be considered on Thursday, 19 April; and on Friday, 20 April item 6 should be considered at the morning meeting and the afternoon meeting should be devoted to the closure of the session. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt that programme of work, which would be implemented flexibly.

20. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.





General Assembly

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A/AC.159/SR.365
23 April 1990

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 365th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 18 April 1990, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. PERERA

(Sri Lanka)

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Election of a Vice-Chairman

General debate

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

ELECTION OF A VICE-CHAIRMAN

1. The CHAIRMAN said that he had received a letter from the Permanent Mission of Mozambique informing him that Mr. Manuel dos Santos had been transferred to another post in his Government's service, and recommending that Mr. Pedro Commissario Afonso, Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the United Nations, should assume the responsibilities of a Vice-Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee.
2. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to elect Mr. Pedro Commissario Afonso as a Vice-Chairman by acclamation.
3. Mr. Afonso (Mozambique) was elected Vice-Chairman by acclamation.
4. Mr. AFONSO (Mozambique) said that the Committee was once again experiencing serious difficulties; its work had been complicated by the decision of some members to withdraw or suspend their participation. Their action ran counter to the aspirations of the peoples of the region. He reaffirmed his delegation's support for the 1971 Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, which remained a sound basis for preparing to convene the Conference on the Indian Ocean at Colombo.

GENERAL DEBATE

5. Mr. AL-ALFI (Democratic Yemen) said that the Committee was meeting with a clear mandate that had been renewed by General Assembly resolution 44/120. It had a very important task, for the conference to be held at Colombo was a significant step in bringing peace to a region that was increasingly witnessing threats posed by the escalating naval arms race.
6. The letters received from the Permanent Representatives of the United States of America, the United Kingdom and France had referred to "withdrawing" from the Committee. If those countries subsequently decided to rejoin it would be for the Committee itself to decide, subject to the advice of the Legal Counsel, on their applications as if they were from new applicants. Withdrawal was not the same as suspending attendance at meetings.
7. The three countries in question claimed to be supporting the declaration on international security and disarmament contained in the final documents of the Ninth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (A/44/551, annex), held at Belgrade in September 1989. However, they should take the Belgrade Declaration as a whole, and not merely select from it what suited them. They had been members of the Committee for a long time but were now arguing that the 1971 Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace was not a fit mandate for the Committee to pursue; having tried, and failed, to damage the Committee from within, they were now attempting to damage it from outside. Democratic Yemen would co-operate with all Committee members working for the success of the conference mandated under General Assembly resolution 44/120.

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8. Ms. COURTNEY (Australia) said that for a number of reasons little progress had been made in the past 20 years towards achieving the ambition, shared by the States of the region, of creating a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean. Yet it was ironic that at a time when the thaw in East-West relations should be providing a new impetus to the proposal, at least in regard to one of the threats to security in the region, members of the Committee had for the first time been unable to agree on a consensus resolution. It was ironic that at the very moment when a similar impetus should have been given to the negotiations, some countries had decided to withdraw or not to participate in those negotiations. Australia believed that problems and differences were best dealt with by constructive engagement, and would therefore remain part of the Ad Hoc Committee process as long as it believed that all members wished to behave similarly.

9. Regrettable though it was, the sovereign decision of certain States to abandon or at least temporarily to desert the Committee was a fact, and the process in which the Committee was engaged must be re-evaluated in the light of that fact. There were four avenues that might be pursued: to attempt to conduct "business as usual" despite the absence of those States; to convene the Colombo Conference in 1991 whether or not all relevant parties were prepared to attend; to take short-term measures to preserve the basis of current work and progress achieved, while waiting for the effect of the rapid changes in the international climate to be absorbed by all members of the international community; or to modernize the basis on which the Committee worked, taking into account the needs of the region, the problems and the threats to security that might arise 20 years hence.

10. If the States of the region were correct in concluding that they would not achieve all of the objectives of the zone of peace without the participation or at least the acquiescence at some level of those countries that had an extraregional military presence and/or a strategic interest in the zone, it followed that at some point those countries would have to be engaged in the conclusion of a zone-of-peace proposal. The Committee was therefore, in reality, left with the single option of investigating short-term measures that would preserve the current basis of its work without wasting its time or recasting or renewing the basis of its work.

11. That option required all delegations to approach the zone-of-peace concept with new ideas. Australia, for example, believed that there was much scope for naval confidence-building measures, and supported regional security arrangements in areas of tension and the enhancement of United Nations mediation, conflict resolution and peace-keeping operations in various parts of the zone. Proposals existed for nuclear-weapon-free zones in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia, and while it was for the States of each region to negotiate the appropriate treaties or agreements themselves, once such agreements were reached it might be possible to explore how the various nuclear-weapon-free zones might eventually be symbolically amalgamated under the umbrella of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace.

12. While the participation of all relevant States would be necessary at some stage, Australia would support, if it were the wish of members of the Committee, the convening, as a first stage, of a conference of regional States, in an effort to facilitate the negotiating process, with the extraregional States being brought into the process once progress towards that goal had been achieved.

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(Ms. Courtney, Australia)

13. It was important that the Committee should not lose sight of the central objective of its work, which was the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean, and Australia would support any proposal that led to that goal. Lasting security demanded more than just military capacity; it rested ultimately on forging broadly based, multidimensional relations between neighbours and among the States of the region that both reassured and benefited all sides.

14. Mr. GHAREKHAN (India) said that the Ad Hoc Committee had reached a critical juncture. Its immediate future had been called into question by reduced participation at the current session. He referred in that connection to General Assembly resolution 2992 (XXVII), under which the Committee had been established, and to resolutions 2832 (XXVI) and 36/90, calling for the elimination from the Indian Ocean of all foreign military presence.

15. The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries had always sought to prevent and reduce manifestations of great-Power rivalries in various parts of the world, particularly in the developing regions. In that context, it had repeatedly affirmed its support for the 1971 Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. The Ninth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries had reaffirmed that support.

16. The Ad Hoc Committee's mandate, deriving directly from the Declaration, was unambiguous. It had been expanded by the General Assembly's decision, in its resolution 34/80 B, to convene the Conference on the Indian Ocean during 1981 at Colombo and to request the Ad Hoc Committee to undertake the preparatory work for the Conference. It was regrettable that it had not been possible to convene the Conference in that year, or in any of the succeeding years, despite consensus decisions to do so.

17. The mandate for the Committee's current session, namely, to complete the preparatory work for the convening of the Conference to be held at Colombo in 1991, was set out in General Assembly resolution 44/120, and further details had been provided in document A/AC.159/L.89. Accordingly, the Committee should concentrate on considering the draft provisional rules of procedure, particularly in the areas of decision-making and participation, the provisional agenda and the structure and organization of the Conference, as well as on substantive issues and principles, with the aim of compiling the views of Member States. He drew attention to the proposals submitted by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, which were before the Committee in documents A/AC.159/L.61, L.60 and L.74. His delegation's views on the substantive issues were outlined in documents A/AC.159/L.26/Add.2 and L.55/Add.1. Those contributions, together with document A/AC.159/L.93 submitted by the Chairman of the Working Group, provided a basis for the resumption and continuation of the Committee's work.

18. His delegation believed that broad issues of international peace and security, which concerned mankind as a whole, should be considered only in international forums. It was no longer possible to contain the repercussions of developments that might only appear to be localized or regional. His country recognized the

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(Mr. Gharekhan, India)

importance of the participation of all permanent members of the Security Council and other major maritime users of the Indian Ocean in the process of consultations with a view to making the Declaration an effective instrument of international peace and security. Accordingly, it had always emphasized the need for them to take part in the Conference.

19. He also underscored the need for the Conference to take the approach outlined in the Declaration and the relevant General Assembly resolutions. It must have an agenda geared to broad international interests and must be open to all interested States. No purpose could be served by repeating earlier efforts to convene a conference with participation limited to the littoral and hinterland States of the region.

20. Mr. KRASULIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Committee found itself in a complex and contradictory situation, with, on the one hand, virtually all the countries of the world welcoming the major changes that were taking place, and, on the other, examples of "old thinking" still being seen in the Ad Hoc Committee. Certain States were unwilling to approach the solution of major international questions from new positions, and a serious obstacle was posed by the fact that they were not prepared to include all the basic components of their military potential in international negotiations. They stubbornly resisted international discussion of their naval strength, because it was an area where they possessed tangible advantages that they did not wish to lose. That explained their opposition to any measures connected with naval matters, and their refusal to take part in the Committee's work.

21. All countries had a right to define their own military policy, but they should take account of the views of other States and the realities of international life. The view of the overwhelming majority of States coincided, and was reflected in the decisions of the United Nations; and the realities of international life were that blocking discussion of naval forces inevitably acted as a brake on the solution of other matters. Where military matters were concerned, all military forces had to be taken into account, and the sooner that fact was understood, the better.

22. Refusal to participate in the Committee's work could be interpreted as a boycott, and as such was a cause for regret, but negative action of that kind should not bring the Committee's work to a standstill. However, it would be unrealistic to consider a solution to matters of substance without the participation of three major naval Powers, and it was to be hoped that their decision was not irreversible and that mutually acceptable solutions might jointly be sought.

23. The Committee should continue with its work to fulfil its mandate and to prepare for the Colombo Conference by dealing with organizational matters and documentation. Most organizational matters had already been decided, and attention should now be focused on preparing draft documents. In that respect, the States that were now refusing to take part in the Committee's work might make their contribution to the general negotiating process. If all members believed that the

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(Mr. Krasulin, USSR)

Committee should be turned into a negotiating body, the Soviet Union would lend its support. The Soviet Union saw no contradiction between continuing the active work of the Committee and, as some delegations had suggested, activating regional efforts by the littoral and hinterland States of the region; those two approaches might in fact complement one another very usefully.

24. In his speech on assuming the Presidency of the USSR, Mr. Gorbachev had emphasized the importance of consistent implementation of the so-called Vladivostok and Krasnoyarsk initiatives; both supported the idea of creating a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean. As in the past, the Soviet Union was prepared to display the greatest possible flexibility and constructiveness in such joint activities.

25. Mr. MAHMOOD (Pakistan) said that in the rapidly evolving international situation the Ad Hoc Committee's work had taken on greater significance. Accordingly, he greatly regretted the decision of three members to withdraw from the Committee, and hoped that they would reconsider that step. In recent years there had been increasing recognition of the need to promote regional disarmament measures in order to strengthen the peace and security of States in various parts of the world. The establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean would be a major contribution to furthering that aim. While supporting the convening of the Conference on the Indian Ocean in 1991, his delegation believed that all preparatory work, including agreement on the main elements of the zone of peace, should be completed before the opening of the Conference. Currently, however, the Ad Hoc Committee was facing an impasse due to the decision of some of its members not to participate in its work. As a possible solution, he supported the proposal that a first stage of the Conference should be held to discuss intraregional issues with the participation of the littoral and hinterland States. Before such a decision could be taken, however, it was essential for the States concerned to reach agreement on the issues to be discussed, which should include the denuclearization of the Indian Ocean; measures to strengthen regional security through a mutual and balanced reduction in armed forces; and procedures for the peaceful settlement of bilateral disputes in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

26. Mr. YU Mengjia (China), noting that the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and France had all been sponsors of General Assembly resolution 44/21, entitled "Enhancing international peace, security and international co-operation in all its aspects in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations", said that the formal decision by the United States, the United Kingdom and France to withdraw from the Ad Hoc Committee was not in keeping with the international co-operation advocated by that resolution. The reasons they had given for withdrawing were not convincing.

27. China supported the principle of consensus. However, over the past 10 or more years, in the process of preparing for the Conference on the Indian Ocean, a few delegations had abused that principle. General Assembly resolution 43/79, which had been adopted by consensus, provided that the Indian Ocean conference should take place in 1990; the fact that resolution 44/120, which had been sponsored by

(Mr. Yu Mengjia, China)

the non-aligned countries, proposed that the Conference should be held in 1991, one year later than scheduled, represented precisely an effort to accommodate the views of some other countries. Regrettably, that move had not met with a positive response from the countries concerned, but had instead been used by some countries as an excuse for withdrawal from the Committee.

28. On the issue of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, it was true that since 1971, major changes had taken place in the international situation. All those changes and developments, however, did not indicate that the Declaration was outdated. The fact was that so far, naval disarmament, which would have a direct bearing on peace and security in the Indian Ocean, had not received adequate attention or had been deliberately shelved in the arms reduction talks between the United States and the Soviet Union; that the military bases and military presence in the Indian Ocean had not been removed; and that the goals set in the Declaration had not been achieved. If the situation was indeed more favourable now than before, as a result of reduced military confrontation in the Indian Ocean, then it was important to use the opportunity to accelerate preparations for the early convening of the Colombo Conference, instead of taking such action as withdrawing from the Committee or not participating in its work.

29. China had consistently supported both the efforts of the States in the Indian Ocean region to safeguard their independence, sovereignty and security and their just proposal and reasonable demand for the establishment of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. His delegation had actively participated in activities designed to promote the convening of the Colombo Conference and the realization of the goals of the zone of peace. His Government still believed that the lack of progress in that regard was attributable, among other major reasons, to military expansion by external Powers in the region. It was therefore necessary to require them to stop such activities, respect the independence, sovereignty and security of the countries in the region and refrain from threatening or interfering with those countries. China always opposed the stationing of troops and the setting up of military bases abroad by any country. In order to ensure peace and security in the Indian Ocean region, it was imperative to remove all forms of military presence of and military occupation by external Powers, the super-Powers in particular, from the Indian Ocean region, including its water, airspace and landmass, as well as its littoral and hinterland States, and to dismantle their military bases and facilities of all types. Those were also basic components of the Indian Ocean zone of peace.

30. The realization of the Indian Ocean zone of peace depended, of course, to a great extent on the efforts of the countries of the Indian Ocean region. The countries of the region should strictly abide by the Charter of the United Nations and conduct their mutual relations on the basis of the principles of mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence, without accumulating armaments in excess of their defence needs and without resorting to the use or threat of force against other countries of the region. Peace and security in the Indian Ocean region would be better

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(Mr. Yu Mengjia, China)

served if all the countries of the region were to commit themselves to those universal principles in the conduct of State relations.

31. The Ad Hoc Committee should do its best to complete the preparations for the Indian Ocean Conference, in keeping with the relevant General Assembly resolutions. Without proper authorization, the Committee had no right to change the decisions made in those resolutions. The Chinese delegation was also ready to study the specific proposals made by some delegations through consultations, while taking into account the situation faced by the Committee. His delegation would participate with a constructive approach in the discussions on any suggestion or proposal that would help realize the goals of the Indian Ocean zone of peace.

32. Mr. ARFA (Iran) said that, in spite of some encouraging indications of change on the international scene, it was discouraging to note the attitude taken by some members of the Ad Hoc Committee with respect to its work and its mandate. The recent decision of certain Powers to withdraw from the Committee would unquestionably have an adverse effect on the current international climate. The reasons those Powers had given to legitimize their decision were not acceptable, and their attitude could only be construed as an indication of an unwillingness to comply with the wishes of the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean region. If the Ad Hoc Committee were to defer to their wishes and compromise its principles, it would be setting a precedent that would neither serve the interests of the littoral and hinterland States nor bring about conditions for an early convening of the Conference at Colombo. The Committee had already made significant progress in connection with the procedural aspects of preparations for the convening of the Conference; it should therefore be able to explore appropriate ways and means of strengthening its work. His delegation was prepared to co-operate fully with other delegations in that effort.

33. Mr. HAGOSS (Ethiopia) said that his delegation was distressed at the turn of events in the Ad Hoc Committee. The arguments advanced by the countries that had withdrawn were not convincing. As a negotiating formula, the principle of consensus required a two-way stream of co-operation. The non-aligned group of States had demonstrated a great deal of flexibility since the time when the Afghanistan question had been used as a stumbling block for the convening of the Colombo Conference. Now that that problem had been solved, it was being argued that the question of super-Power rivalry in the post-Reykjavik era should not be mentioned. However, even if it was assumed that such rivalry was a thing of the past, super-Power presence in the Indian Ocean was a reality that the countries of the region must face.

34. With regard to the so-called obsolete nature of the 1971 Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, it was important to remember that the Declaration was based on the situation prevailing at the time of its adoption, and that it reflected a great degree of anticipation. Like all such anticipating documents, it was subject to appraisal. But the suspension or severance of contacts with a committee guided by such a declaration was not the best way to amend or rewrite the text in question. It would be better to advance alternative proposals. A divisive

(Mr. Hagoss, Ethiopia)

approach would only mar the atmosphere of co-operation that had been achieved in the past. What was good for global peace should be good for everyone.

35. In their communications stating the reasons for their withdrawal from the Committee, the withdrawing delegations had referred to the Declaration of the Ninth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (A/44/551, annex). Since the countries in question had misquoted the Belgrade Declaration, he wished to emphasize that the latter half of paragraph 22 of that text read:

"They noted that efforts by the Non-Aligned Countries and others to convene the Conference on the Indian Ocean scheduled for July 1990 in Colombo were being hindered despite substantial progress made in the UN Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean. The Heads of State or Government called for the full and active participation in the Conference by the major maritime users and the Permanent Members of the Security Council, whose co-operation is essential for the success of the Conference, and requested the UN Secretary-General to extend necessary assistance to the Committee to facilitate the finalization of its preparatory work, to enable the Conference to take place."

36. In the absence of a satisfactory explanation for the withdrawing countries' position, and since it was impossible to hear from them in the Ad Hoc Committee, he had tried to find some literature that might throw some light on their attitude. In an article entitled "Disarmament at Sea", which had appeared in Foreign Policy (issue No. 77, Winter 1989-1990), Michael L. Ross indicated that General William Burns, then director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, had told the United Nations General Assembly Political and Security Committee in October 1988 that, located between and separated from allies by two oceans, the United States relied on maritime activities and freedom of navigation under international law to protect its security and trade interests, and that, therefore, the United States could not agree to any arms limitations or additional constraints on its naval activities.

37. In the same article, the author had also indicated that in April 1989 the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations, Vice Admiral Charles Larson, had told Congress that confidence- and security-building measures at sea would be unacceptably intrusive, set a bad precedent, impinge on the doctrine of freedom of the seas, inhibit the navy's missions outside the European theatre, possibly violate international law and weaken the West's deterrent posture and consequently decrease Western security.

38. The approach taken by the countries members of the Western European and Other States Group did not augur well for international co-operation. His delegation hoped that those States would re-examine their sovereign decisions by taking due account of the concerns expressed by the rest of the Committee's membership and would once again join the Committee in its effort to find the elusive consensus to which they seemed to be so attached.

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39. Mr. AL-ZADGALY (Oman) said that the decision of three major delegations to withdraw from the Committee was highly regrettable. He felt that the Committee had been able to reach agreement on a certain number of substantive points and principles, particularly those elaborated by the Chairman of the Working Group in document A/AC.159/L.93. The principle of dialogue could not be upheld if the preparatory work for the convening of the Conference was hindered.

40. Efforts should be made to extend the climate of consensus prevailing in international relations to the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean. To that end, it was necessary to implement the Declaration on the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. He supported the principle of consensus as a basis for the Committee's work, provided that it was not applied solely to organizational but also to substantive issues. In accordance with that principle, the non-aligned countries members of the Committee had made all possible efforts to promote the achievement of consensus by the General Assembly, yet those attempts had been rejected by other States. He asked whether it was reasonable to hold an international conference devoted only to the security of the littoral and hinterland States without discussing the subsidiary aspects and the external conditions that could contribute to strengthening international peace and security.

41. Paragraph 22 of the document on international security and disarmament in the final documents of the Ninth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries had reaffirmed the importance that those countries attached to the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and other major maritime users of the Indian Ocean in the process of creating a zone of peace in the region. The paragraph should not be construed as meaning that the non-aligned countries had conferred upon the permanent members of the Security Council the privilege of using their participation or non-participation as a kind of veto that could be used to hinder the preparatory work. Accordingly, his delegation felt that all the States concerned in the zone, including the members of the Western European and Other States Group of the Ad Hoc Committee, should continue to take part in that work. He urged the Chairman to continue consultations with the delegations that had suspended their participation in the Committee.

42. Mr. PEERTHUM (Mauritius) reaffirmed his delegation's commitment to the creation of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean, and emphasized that it was necessary not to lose momentum at a time when genuine progress could be achieved. He urged the Committee to continue its efforts for the convening of the Conference despite the withdrawal of France, the United Kingdom and the United States. The reasons for the withdrawal of the major Western Powers militarily present in the region had not been convincing, especially as other members of the Western European and Other States Group of the Ad Hoc Committee had offered no explanations for their non-participation in the current session.

43. Although in principle his country would not welcome any weakening of the scope of the 1971 Declaration, any review of the Declaration that could ensure the co-operation of all countries concerned in the creation of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean should be explored and encouraged.

44. Mr. PLATIS (Greece) said that, with the decision by the three Western nuclear Powers to withdraw from the Committee and the non-participation by six other Western Member States, it was no longer possible to continue with "business as usual". Rather than heaping blame upon the absent countries, Committee members must assess the new situation and the future of the Committee.

45. The Committee had three options before it: to complete the remaining preparatory work relating to the Conference on the Indian Ocean and convene the Conference at Colombo in 1991, as stipulated in General Assembly resolution 44/120; to dissolve itself, on the assumption that without the three Western nuclear Powers it could not make any progress; or to decide to convene the Conference at a later date.

46. It would not be timely to discuss the viability of the 1971 Declaration. To some, the Declaration represented a long-standing effort by the littoral and hinterland States to put an end to the dangerous rivalry between the two super-Powers in the region. Although it could be argued that the Declaration was obsolete because it had not been endorsed by all members of the international community, his delegation did not share that view. The Declaration was still valid, but another way should perhaps be found to promote its principles and ensure the implementation of its objectives.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.159/SR.366
23 April 1990

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 366th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 19 April 1990, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. PERERA

(Sri Lanka)

CONTENTS

Implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/120

- (a) Work on the substantive and organizational issues related to the Conference on the Indian Ocean in accordance with paragraphs 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of resolution 44/120
- (b) Report of the Ad Hoc Committee to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session on the implementation of resolution 44/120

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Any corrections to the records of this meeting and of other meetings will be issued in a corrigendum.

The meeting was called to order at 11.20 a.m.

IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 44/120

(a) WORK ON THE SUBSTANTIVE AND ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES RELATED TO THE CONFERENCE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPHS 6, 7, 8, 9 AND 10 OF RESOLUTION 44/120

(b) REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS FORTY-FIFTH SESSION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION 44/120

1. Ms. COURTNEY (Australia) noted that paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 44/120 provided for the completion of the Ad Hoc Committee's work in 1990 with a view to the convening of the Conference at Colombo in 1991. At the previous meeting, several delegations had pointed out that the participation of all five permanent members of the Security Council was a prerequisite for the convening of the Conference. However, as three permanent members of the Security Council had recently withdrawn from the Committee, her delegation was considering the implications of that fact for the Committee's work.

2. Mr. JAYASINGHE (Sri Lanka) said that, given the withdrawal from the Committee of three Member States and the non-participation of six other delegations, it was premature to enter into a substantive discussion of the agenda item. Some members of the Committee were still discussing with their Governments the repercussions of those developments.

3. Drawing attention to the notes verbales from the United Kingdom, France and the United States addressed to the Secretary-General (A/45/213, 214 and 215, and A/AC.159/L.99 and L.100), he said that there was clearly a misunderstanding with regard to the declaration on international security and disarmament contained in the final documents of the Ninth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries. Although the declaration had emphasized the importance of the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council in the process of creating a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean, it had never been intended that their participation should be viewed as a pre-condition for the convening of the Conference.

4. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the meeting should be adjourned in order to allow the members of the Committee to engage in informal consultations. He also suggested that the officers of the Committee should meet immediately following the current meeting.

5. Mr. ALAKWAA (Yemen) said that it was necessary to consider the future orientation of the Ad Hoc Committee.

6. Mr. ZIMBA (Mozambique) suggested that, in view of the need for an exchange of views, the meeting of the officers of the Committee should be open-ended.

7. The CHAIRMAN said that all interested delegations were welcome to attend.

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8. Ms. COURTNEY (Australia), Mr. HADI (Indonesia) and Mr. NOTZEL (German Democratic Republic) said that they endorsed the suggestions made by the representative of Mozambique and the Chairman.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.159/SR.367
25 April 1990

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 367th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 20 April 1990, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. PERERA

(Sri Lanka)

CONTENTS

General debate (continued)

Closure of the session

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The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh) said that the recent developments relating to withdrawal from the Ad Hoc Committee could not be blamed on the Committee, which had done its work as best it could. Under the circumstances, there was no point in expending further energies unproductively; delegations should now reorganize their thoughts and reaffirm their commitment to the fulfilment of the goal of establishing the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. While he respected the decision of the sovereign States that had withdrawn from membership of or participation in the Committee, he felt that no useful purpose could be served by walking away from the problems they had encountered. Several important ideas had been put forward during the current session; surely a way could be found to get out of the impasse. The delegations of Australia and Greece were to be commended for their faithfulness in continuing to work with the Committee.
2. MR. JAYASINGHE (Sri Lanka),* speaking on behalf of the non-aligned States members of the Ad Hoc Committee, said that they regretted the decision of France, the United Kingdom and the United States to withdraw from the Committee. They also regretted the decision of Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands and Norway not to participate in the Committee's work during the current session. They appreciated the decision of the two remaining members of the group of Western European and Other States, namely Australia and Greece, to continue to participate in the Committee's work.
3. The non-aligned States members of the Committee reaffirmed their commitment to the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, and were of the firm belief that it was still valid, despite subsequent developments. In fact, over the years the Declaration had become more relevant in the context of the unprecedented military build-up in the Indian Ocean region.
4. The apparent breaking of consensus in the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 44/120 had been cited by the three States as one of the reasons for their decision to leave the Committee. However, the non-aligned members had in fact spared no effort in search of agreement on a text of a draft resolution both within and outside the Committee. The draft text had first been submitted by the non-aligned countries during the Committee's summer session in 1989. At that stage, no alternative proposals had been submitted. Instead, a few countries, including those that had withdrawn from the Committee, had proposed further informal consultations prior to the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. The non-aligned countries had expressed their dismay over that proposal, knowing that in the event of an inability to reach agreement, the rules of procedure of the General Assembly would be applicable. However, having pointed that out, the non-aligned countries had acceded to the proposal, in order to accommodate the concerns of the parties that had made it.

* This statement will be issued as document A/AC.159/L.102.

(Mr. Jayasinghe, Sri Lanka)

5. During the consultations at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly, two or three attempts had been made by the Western European and Other States members of the Committee to offer some informal amendments to the draft text. Those attempts in no way came close to being compromise resolutions, as claimed by some members of that group. Efforts had been made until the last day of the meetings of the First Committee to harmonize views on the elements that might be included in a draft text. But the efforts had failed, as the amendments proposed by the Western European States had not even accommodated the basic concerns of the non-aligned States. Consequently, the rules of procedure of the General Assembly had applied in the consideration of the draft text. Under the circumstances, it was not accurate to claim that consensus had been broken or to attribute responsibility for breaking the consensus to the sponsors of the draft resolution.

6. The consensus decision in General Assembly resolution 44/120 to hold the Colombo Conference on the Indian Ocean in 1991 had apparently been another reason for the withdrawal of the three States from the Ad Hoc Committee. Yet those three States had been parties to a similar consensus decision to hold the Conference in 1990, as shown in General Assembly resolution 43/79. The non-aligned members had agreed to postpone the date to 1991 purely to accommodate the concerns of a few members, including the three States who had withdrawn from the Committee.

7. The original decision to hold the Colombo Conference in 1983 had been taken in 1981. Since then, the non-aligned members had agreed several times to postpone the Conference in order to accommodate the concerns of a few members; they were now convinced that the proposal to delay the Conference further was due not to lack of preparation but rather to lack of political will and other preoccupations of a few members of the Committee.

8. The three States which had withdrawn from the Committee had referred in their communications to the United Nations Secretary-General to the declaration adopted by the Ninth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Belgrade in September 1989. The non-aligned countries regretted that that reference had been made out of context and had been used to give a different interpretation. The purpose of calling for the participation in the Colombo Conference of the permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users had been to remind those States of their responsibility to attend the Conference. It had not been intended as a pre-condition for holding the Conference. That clarification should remove any misgivings on the part of any State wishing to refer to the Belgrade declaration.

9. The non-aligned members wished to draw the attention of the States concerned to the recent unprecedented developments on the international scene. Those were the result of a new willingness to co-operate in resolving differences in a peaceful manner. Any attempt to shy away from the commitment to dialogue was contrary to those developments and to the principles governing international relations. It was the responsibility of the international community to extend the co-operation demonstrated elsewhere to the Indian Ocean region. The overwhelming desire of the international community had been demonstrated by the 137 votes cast

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(Mr. Jayasinghe, Sri Lanka)

in favour of General Assembly resolution 44/120. The non-aligned members hoped that it would be possible for the States which had left the Committee or had decided not to participate in the current session to rejoin the others and continue to work together in the common interest.

10. Mr. AL-ALFI (Democratic Yemen) proposed that the statement just made should be issued as a document of the Committee. He further proposed that delegations that wished to make additional proposals should submit them in order that they might be circulated before the summer session.

11. He noted that several delegations had appealed to the States that had withdrawn from the Committee or had chosen not to participate to reconsider their decision. Their appeals should not be construed as indications of weakness or acceptance of blame on the part of the members which continued to participate in the Committee's work. The Committee should not put everything on hold while waiting for the withdrawing members to return. The Committee had not expelled them; if they were truly interested in working together with everyone as partners, the Committee should certainly be flexible and welcome them back.

12. It seemed to his delegation that there had been some misunderstanding with regard to the question of regional efforts. His delegation was not interested in going to the Conference only to find that other States of the region were taking a different position; it was essential to co-ordinate the regional position. His delegation would not favour replacing the Conference with a regional effort. Some delegations had objected to efforts to co-ordinate a regional position; now, however, they were proposing a regional seminar. His delegation was more than willing to co-ordinate its efforts with those of Bangladesh, Pakistan, India or any other country in the region. It was not right to simply tell a country to solve its own problems. The purpose of the Committee's efforts was to establish the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace, not to solve bilateral problems.

13. The CHAIRMAN asked whether any delegation objected to the proposal of Democratic Yemen to have the statement made on behalf of the non-aligned members of the Ad Hoc Committee circulated as a Committee document.

14. Ms. COURTNEY (Australia) said that if the document was to be circulated in the normal manner, as a document reproducing the views of a group of States, she would have no objection.

15. The CHAIRMAN replied that it would be issued as a document setting out the views of a group of States. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to have the statement in question circulated as a Committee document.

16. It was so decided.

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17. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that members agreed to the proposal of Democratic Yemen that delegations should submit any additional proposals for circulation to members during the inter-sessional period.

18. It was so decided.

19. Mr. JAIN (India) said that his delegation could not associate itself with any observation that was not in conformity with the position of India as outlined in the statement he had made at the 365th meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee.

20. Ms. COURTNEY (Australia) thanked the representative of Sri Lanka for his comments addressed to her delegation. Australia felt that, in participating in the Ad Hoc Committee's work, it was merely fulfilling its duty as a Member of the United Nations.

21. The perception of compromise and flexibility was an individual matter. Having taken part in the negotiations on a draft text at the July 1989 session, she was puzzled by the Sri Lankan representative's claim that no alternative proposals had been submitted. Indeed, strenuous efforts had been made on both sides to reach a compromise. Paragraph 29 of the Committee's report (A/44/29) acknowledged as much, stating that the discussions in the Committee had been inconclusive. In view of those efforts, it was an exaggeration to state, as the representative of Sri Lanka had done with regard to the negotiations in the First Committee, that the alternatives suggested by the Group of Western European and Other States had in no way come closer to the amendments proposed by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

22. Moreover, any misunderstanding with regard to the declaration on international security and disarmament contained in the final documents of the Ninth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries was due to the wording of the declaration itself, which stated that the co-operation of the major maritime users and the permanent members of the Security Council was "essential" for the success of the Conference on the Indian Ocean.

23. Mr. NOTZEL (German Democratic Republic) assured the Committee of his delegation's willingness to do its part in helping to overcome the current impasse. He expressed appreciation to the representative of Sri Lanka for his statement and to the delegations of Australia and Greece for their continued participation in the Committee's work. He supported the idea of a compilation of the proposals submitted in addition to the 19 substantive issues and principles.

24. Mr. HAGOSS (Ethiopia) said that the decisions taken by sovereign States must be respected even though it might be difficult to appreciate the logic behind them. His delegation viewed with apprehension the decision of three States to withdraw from the Committee, mainly because of its implications for the future of multilateral diplomacy, particularly at a time when the international community could expect to reap the benefits of the ending of the "cold war". His delegation, however, had responded with flexibility. In appealing to the members of the Group of Western European and Other States to reconsider their decision, the non-aligned

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(Mr. Hagoss, Ethiopia)

countries had demonstrated magnanimity, which in his culture was a sign not of weakness but of strength. The countries concerned had acted out of confidence in the majority which they commanded in the General Assembly, and out of their conviction that the tactic of withdrawal was not part of the "rules of the game" within the international community.

25. He urged the Chairman to pursue consultations with the delegations which had withdrawn, and encouraged other members to express regret at the decision taken by those countries and the hope that they would return to the Committee so that differences could be ironed out.

26. Mr. MAHMOOD (Pakistan), replying to the comments made by the representative of Democratic Yemen, said that in his view, there was no misunderstanding with regard to the question of regional efforts. His delegation supported the convening of the Conference in 1991, but felt that all the preparatory work, including a definition of the main elements of a zone of peace, should be completed beforehand. He referred the members of the Committee to the statement which he had made at the 365th meeting.

27. Mr. KRASULIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said he did not doubt that all members of the Committee regretted the recent decisions taken by three permanent members of the Security Council and other Western States. His delegation's analysis of the real causes of those developments coincided with the assessment made earlier by the representative of Sri Lanka. It was encouraging that the first reactions of bewilderment had been replaced by a workmanlike approach and a lively exchange of views among several delegations, including the Soviet Union, with regard to the future direction of the Committee's work.

28. It was time for a new approach, not just in words, but in practice. The Committee was far from having exhausted its possibilities. He agreed that the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace could serve as a basis for future work. It was time to move away from general statements and engage in negotiations leading to the drafting of documents which could be considered at the Conference and which would embody the concept of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. As that concept had not yet been elaborated, it would be necessary, sooner or later, to begin grappling with the issue, taking into account the full range of views expressed by Member States.

29. It was to be hoped that by taking such an approach, the Committee could ensure the renewed participation of the Western countries. Without their co-operation, it was difficult to see how the Declaration could amount to more than mere words on paper.

30. He supported the suggestion made by the representative of Democratic Yemen that members should make use of the time until the next session to analyse their positions and submit practical proposals on the substantive question of creating a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean.

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(Mr. Krasulin, USSR)

31. The current session had given an impetus to the Committee's work and had helped to break the deadlock which had existed for a long time. His delegation was ready to engage in consultations during the period leading up to the next session.

32. Mr. AL-ALFI (Democratic Yemen) said that his earlier remarks had not dealt with any proposal by a specific country, but he wished to point out that if what the representative of Pakistan had said was true, the proposal by Pakistan, unfortunately, coincided with a paper submitted by a certain group before the previous session, and Democratic Yemen therefore disapproved of that proposal. He was concerned that his statement earlier in the meeting may have been misinterpreted by the representative of Pakistan; he had not mentioned any specific proposals, and his country looked forward to continued co-operation with Pakistan and all other non-aligned States.

33. Mr. MAHMOOD (Pakistan) said that he had not been reacting to remarks made by the representative of Democratic Yemen, and had not meant to cause any misunderstanding. He had merely taken the opportunity to reiterate his Government's position on the proposal in question. His Government likewise looked forward to continued co-operation with Democratic Yemen.

34. Mr. SHA Zukang (China) said he agreed with the assessment of the situation in which the Committee found itself contained in the statement made by the representative of Sri Lanka on behalf of the States members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. A number of delegations had put forward proposals concerning the future work of the Committee, and they included the proposal to hold regional meetings. However, the Committee could not prepare for a regional meeting without a new mandate, for its existing mandate was for the preparation of the Colombo Conference.

35. The Committee faced a number of difficulties in preparing that Conference; much work had already been done and progress should be maintained, but recent developments should be taken into account. How long it would be before the Indian Ocean were established as a zone of peace depended on the political will of all concerned; progress must be made step by step, and how big the first step would be - the convening of the Colombo Conference - could be discussed further at the next session of the Committee. If, however, there were general agreement that the first step should be the holding of a regional meeting, the Committee would need a new mandate.

36. Mr. JAYASINGHE (Sri Lanka) welcomed the statement by the representative of the USSR that his delegation would be ready for inter-sessional consultations.

37. A number of new proposals had been made to the Committee, and it was the view of his delegation that some of them could be accommodated under its existing mandate. There was no serious reason for the Committee to attempt to rewrite its mandate. Much should and could be done in terms of serious negotiations.

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(Mr. Jayasinghe, Sri Lanka)

38. He welcomed the role played by the representatives of Australia and Greece in seeking compromise, but wished to point out that during consultations some delegations had refused to consider the text of the draft resolution because they regarded it as extreme. Two short "non-papers" of undisclosed provenance had been submitted which had made clear that there was no question of discussing arrangements for the Colombo Conference as long as there was reference to the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. One of the "non-papers" had proposed a meeting in Colombo of the littoral and hinterland States members of the Committee, and that fell far short of what had been intended.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

39. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had begun its session with a deep sense of distress over the formal notification by France, the United Kingdom and the United States of their withdrawal from the Committee and over the decision of some other members of the Group of Western European and Other States not to participate in the session. During formal and informal consultations many delegations had expressed regret and had suggested appealing to the countries concerned to rejoin. Most of the views expressed during the general debate had reflected the positive approach of delegations to the Committee's work and the need for a thorough examination of that work in the light of the rapidly evolving world situation and of recent developments within the Committee.

40. Several important proposals had been made and a useful exchange of views had taken place in an open-ended informal meeting of the officers of the Committee and during other informal consultations. Many delegations had considered that in view of the seriousness of the issues facing the Committee they needed time for their Governments to study the proposals.

41. He said that recent developments had, in a way, given the Committee a jolt and a much-needed impetus to go ahead with its work, and he hoped that at the next session it would be ready to agree on a policy acceptable to all.

42. He then declared the session closed.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.159/SR.368
5 July 1990

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 368th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York, on
Monday, 2 July 1990, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. PERERA (Sri Lanka)

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EXPRESSION OF SYMPATHY IN CONNECTION WITH THE RECENT EARTHQUAKE IN THE ISLAMIC
REPUBLIC OF IRAN

IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 44/120:

- (a) WORK ON THE SUBSTANTIVE AND ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES RELATED TO THE
CONFERENCE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPHS 6, 7, 8, 9
AND 10 OF RESOLUTION 44/120
- (b) REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS FORTY-FIFTH
SESSION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION 44/120

OTHER MATTERS

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The meeting was called to order at 11.15 a.m.

EXPRESSION OF SYMPATHY IN CONNECTION WITH THE RECENT EARTHQUAKE IN THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

1. The CHAIRMAN, speaking on behalf of the Committee, expressed sympathy in connection with the recent earthquake in the Islamic Republic of Iran.
2. Mr. NAIMI-ARFA (Islamic Republic of Iran) thanked the Committee for its expression of sympathy in connection with the earthquake in his country. His delegation also wished to express its appreciation to all the countries, relief agencies and individuals who had helped alleviate the suffering of the people affected by the natural disaster.

IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 44/120:

- (a) WORK ON THE SUBSTANTIVE AND ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES RELATED TO THE CONFERENCE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPHS 6, 7, 8, 9 AND 10 OF RESOLUTION 44/120
 - (b) REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS FORTY-FIFTH SESSION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION 44/120
3. The CHAIRMAN recalled that at the Committee's spring session many members had expressed regret at the formal notification by France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America of their withdrawal from the Committee, and at the decision by other members of the Group of Western European and Other States not to participate in the session. Almost all members had felt that the Committee should continue its efforts to persuade those States to rejoin the Committee and participate in the important peace process it represented. Despite recent improvements in the international climate, the establishment of zones of peace in various regions of the world remained a valid approach towards achieving a global system of peace and security.
 4. Continued efforts must be made to persuade States that had withdrawn from the Ad Hoc Committee to return, since their participation was vital to the success of its endeavours. At the spring session, many members had said that the Committee should re-examine the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace in the light of the new challenges that had arisen. While he was aware that the issue was a highly sensitive one, he felt it was imperative that the Committee address it at the current session.
 5. With regard to the preparatory work for the Conference on the Indian Ocean, the new situation created by the withdrawal of three permanent members of the Security Council and the absence of other members of the Group of Western European and Other States seemed to indicate that there was no prospect of convening the Conference with universal participation in the near future. In response to that new challenge, several members from the Indian Ocean region had proposed that the

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(The Chairman)

Conference should be held in stages and that the first stage should be devoted to a discussion of regional security issues by the States of the region. The Committee might also consider whether there was any point in holding the Conference without the participation of major maritime users, or whether it should be postponed while efforts were made to persuade the States that had withdrawn from the Committee to rejoin it. He suggested that all those matters should be considered in informal consultations and during formal meetings of the Committee.

6. Mr. KRASULIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that recent events had raised hopes that the cold war could be brought to an end through the joint efforts of many States, thereby paving the way for a peaceful period in the development of all mankind. While active efforts were being made to achieve disarmament on land, sea-based weapons were playing an increasingly dangerous destabilizing role. Modern naval forces were capable of waging war at sea while actively influencing the course of military operations on land. It was senseless therefore to discuss defence doctrines while overlooking the potential of naval forces. In recent years, the Soviet Union had repeatedly proposed specific measures to halt the naval arms race, but the United States of America still rejected any form of arms control over its naval forces. There could be no progress in disarmament in general, however, unless naval weapons were taken into account.

7. It was regrettable that a number of Western countries were not participating at the current session of the Committee. Nevertheless, the Committee seemed ready to finally undertake the practical work of preparing for the Colombo Conference.

8. The final document of the Conference should be a treaty or agreement on a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean. Such a treaty should, first and foremost, include a provision declaring the Indian Ocean a zone of peace for all time, free from nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. It should include a definition of the zone of peace, with specific provisions relating to the halting and non-resumption of the military presence and military activities of non-littoral States, except for cases involving the transit of warships, submarines and aircraft, goodwill visits or the rendering of humanitarian assistance to Indian Ocean countries; stopovers to deal with accidents; and the use of military personnel or equipment for peaceful scientific research.

9. The definition of the zone of peace could also include provisions on the halting and non-resumption of the construction and use of military installations by non-littoral States, the use of ports and airfields by vessels and aircraft carrying nuclear weapons, and the deployment and testing of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

10. The parties to the treaty could declare their intention to promote international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In that connection, the need to strengthen the non-proliferation régime should also be stressed.

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(Mr. Krasulin, USSR)

11. The treaty should contain a provision on the inadmissibility of the use of force or the threat of force, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations, by non-littoral, littoral, island and hinterland States. All disputes arising in the zone or in connection with it should be settled by peaceful means, through negotiation. There should also be a provision on the establishment of a special international control mechanism for verifying compliance with obligations under the treaty. The document should define such basic terms as "zone of peace in the Indian Ocean", "littoral, island and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean region", "Indian Ocean region", and "military presence and military activities of non-littoral States in the Indian Ocean region".

12. The treaty should include a protocol on guarantees by non-littoral States concerning the zone of peace, particularly the obligation of nuclear Powers to refrain from using nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction against any parties to the treaty and from deploying or testing such weapons in the zone. The protocol should also include a provision on the non-use of the zone of peace as a launching pad for aggression against States in the zone or in other regions.

13. With regard to the functioning of the Committee, he drew attention to the text setting forth the Soviet delegation's position on the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean in general and the Committee's activities in particular. The current approach of combining formal meetings with the discussion of questions of substance in the open-ended working group was quite acceptable. At the same time, his delegation was prepared to consider the possibility of changing the Committee's working methods if that would help achieve its objectives. Any attempt to interrupt the Committee's work for any reason was, however, unacceptable. Lastly, the draft resolution to be submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session should provide for the Committee to continue to work actively in 1991.

OTHER MATTERS

14. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had received an invitation from the Colombo-based organization Indian Ocean Marine Affairs Co-operation to attend the Second Conference on Economic, Scientific and Technical Co-operation in the Indian Ocean, to be held from 3 to 7 September 1990 at Arusha, Tanzania. The Committee would be given further information in that regard at a later date.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.159/SR.369
6 July 1990

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 369th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 3 July 1990, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. PERERA

(Sri Lanka)

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Implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/120 (continued)

- (a) Work on the substantive and organizational issues related to the Conference on the Indian Ocean in accordance with paragraphs 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of resolution 44/120
- (b) Report of the Ad Hoc Committee to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session on the implementation of resolution 44/120

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Any corrections to the record of this meeting and of other meetings will be issued in a corrigendum.

The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 44/120 (continued)

(a) WORK ON THE SUBSTANTIVE AND ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES RELATED TO THE CONFERENCE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPHS 6, 7, 8, 9 AND 10 OF RESOLUTION 44/120

(b) REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS FORTY-FIFTH SESSION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION 44/120

1. Mr. SHA (China) said that the withdrawal of the United States, the United Kingdom and France from the Ad Hoc Committee ran counter to the shared desire of the States in the Indian Ocean region to strengthen their co-operation and safeguard peace, and also created obstacles to the Committee's work. The establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean was highly complex, and differences which arose should be resolved through discussions in good faith, on the basis of the equality of all States, a task which required patience and persistence. His delegation agreed that the Chairman should endeavour to persuade the three States to reconsider their decision and return to the Committee at an early date.

2. Two fundamental issues must be addressed in the efforts to establish a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean, and progress in one area would have a positive influence on efforts in the other. Firstly, as stipulated in the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace [General Assembly resolution 2832 (XXVI)], the great Powers must halt any further expansion of their military presence in the Indian Ocean and must not use the region for any threat or use of force against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or independence of the countries in the region. The great Powers must not engage in any subversion or aggression against those countries and must terminate their military presence in all littoral and hinterland States in the region, whether in the Indian Ocean, in the air space above or on land, and should dismantle their military bases and facilities in the region.

3. The second issue concerned the efforts of the countries in the Indian Ocean themselves. Those countries should strictly abide by the United Nations Charter and, motivated by respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality, mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence, should refrain from seeking any armaments which exceeded their defence requirements and from the threat or use of force against any country in the region. In keeping with the section of the Final Document of the Meeting of the Littoral and Hinterland States of the Indian Ocean concerning the denuclearization of the region, the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean should agree not to acquire or introduce nuclear weapons in the Indian Ocean themselves. If those countries reached such agreements through consultations, all States should respect them and undertake to ensure the nuclear-free status of the region. In particular, nuclear-weapon States should refrain from the threat or use of nuclear weapons in the region.

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(Mr. Sha, China)

4. The Ad Hoc Committee must acknowledge the new reality created by the withdrawal of certain countries from it and by their refusal to participate in its meetings: namely, if the Conference on the Indian Ocean were to be held in 1991, it would not enjoy universal participation. He agreed with the suggestion made by the Chairman at the preceding meeting to the effect that a flexible approach should be taken, and that informal consultations should be held. His delegation would approach discussions of proposals conducive to the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean in a constructive manner.

5. The Ad Hoc Committee had always conducted its work in accordance with the mandate entrusted to it by the relevant General Assembly resolutions, and it must continue to do so. Given the current situation, the Ad Hoc Committee could, in the context of its preparations for the Conference on the Indian Ocean, consider various proposals, including the possibility of convening regional meetings. Relevant action could then be taken once a further mandate was received from the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.



General Assembly

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9 July 1990

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 370th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 5 July 1990, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. PERERA

(Sri Lanka)

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Implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/120 (continued)

- (a) Work on the substantive and organizational issues related to the Conference on the Indian Ocean in accordance with paragraphs 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of resolution 44/120
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The meeting was called to order at 11.30 a.m.

IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 44/120 (continued) (A/AC.159/L.60, L.61, L.74, L.90 and L.98)

(a) WORK ON THE SUBSTANTIVE AND ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES RELATED TO THE CONFERENCE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPHS 6, 7, 8, 9 AND 10 OF RESOLUTION 44/120

(b) REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS FORTY-FIFTH SESSION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION 44/120

1. Mr. AL-ALFI (Yemen) said that formal meetings should be preferred to informal consultations so as to avoid any criticism that the Committee was not properly carrying out the very important mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly. The specific proposals put forward by the representatives of the Soviet Union and China should be given careful consideration in that connection. Other approaches, such as using the Working Group, should also be explored. In general, the Committee should focus its attention on its principal tasks: convening the Conference on the Indian Ocean and implementing the Declaration. Although regional efforts should also be considered, they should be viewed as a way of preparing for the Conference, not as an alternative to it.

2. Mr. JAIN (India) said that he agreed with the representative of Yemen concerning the need to conduct work in formal meetings. It was sometimes useful, however, to consider such documents as the draft framework of the provisional agenda for the Conference (A/AC.159/L.60) and the draft provisional rules of procedure of the Conference (A/AC.159/L.61) in informal consultations.

3. Mr. KRASULIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that he supported the views of the representative of Yemen concerning the importance of formal meetings. Informal consultations were useful for dealing with complicated or divisive issues. The Committee could, however, discuss such questions as the draft framework of the provisional agenda and the draft provisional rules of procedure of the Conference in formal meetings. Excessive use of informal consultations would play into the hands of those who sought to discredit the work of the Committee.

4. The CHAIRMAN said that he agreed that the Committee should consider non-controversial matters in formal meetings and points on which there was disagreement in informal consultations. He noted that there seemed to be general agreement on the draft framework of the provisional agenda for the Conference and invited delegations to comment on items 1 to 7 of the provisional agenda.

5. Mr. JAYASINGHE (Sri Lanka), referring to item 1, inquired who would open the Conference.

6. Mr. KRASULIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, in deference to the host country and in recognition of its efforts to convene the Conference, the

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(Mr. Krasulin, USSR)

Conference should be opened by a representative of Sri Lanka. The Committee therefore should state specifically that the Conference should be opened by a representative of Sri Lanka.

7. Ms. COURTNEY (Australia) said that she supported the idea that the Conference should be opened by Sri Lanka.

8. Mr. AL-ALFI (Yemen) said that he supported the Soviet proposal to specify that the Conference should be opened by a representative of Sri Lanka.

9. Mr. JAIN (India) said that his delegation supported the view that the Conference should be opened by a representative of Sri Lanka. It was for the Government of that country, of course, to choose the individual who would perform that function.

10. Mr. POERNOMO (Indonesia) said that he fully supported the Soviet proposal and felt that the President of Sri Lanka would be the most suitable person to open the Conference.

11. The CHAIRMAN said he took it that the Committee wished to decide that the Conference should be opened by a representative of Sri Lanka.

12. It was so decided.

13. Mr. KRASULIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) suggested that the agenda should include a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

14. Mr. JAYASINGHE (Sri Lanka) thanked the delegations which had paid a tribute to his country by suggesting that the Conference should be opened by a representative of his Government.

15. Since the Conference was to be held under the auspices of the United Nations, it would also be appropriate to include a statement by the Secretary-General or his representative as an agenda item, following the opening of the Conference and a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

16. Mr. PLATIS (Greece) endorsed the suggestion by the representative of Sri Lanka.

17. Mr. HAGOSS (Ethiopia) said that at the current stage the Committee should simply reach an understanding to the effect that certain statements would be presented at the opening of the Conference; it should not attempt to predetermine the order in which they would be made. The single item "Opening of the Conference" could cover both the statement by a representative of Sri Lanka and the statement by the Secretary-General or his representative.

18. Mr. AL-ALFI (Yemen) said that logic dictated that the opening of the Conference should be followed, in order, by a minute of silent prayer or

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(Mr. Al-Alfi, Yemen)

meditation, the adoption of the agenda, and the election of the President, followed by a statement by the Secretary-General or his representative as a separate agenda item.

19. Mr. PLATIS (Greece) said that, in his view, the election of the President and the adoption of the rules of procedure should precede the adoption of the agenda.

20. Ms. COURTNEY (Australia) agreed with the representative of Ethiopia that at the current stage the Committee should not attempt to specify exactly which statements would comprise the opening of the Conference, particularly since it was not yet known whether the Conference would in fact be held under the aegis of the United Nations and which countries would be participating.

21. As to the order in which the item should be placed on the agenda, she felt that the Committee could be guided by the standard practice followed at other international conferences. While she agreed with the representative of Greece that the President should be elected before the agenda was adopted, it would be more appropriate to adopt the agenda before the rules of procedure.

22. Mr. JAIN (India) said that the provisional agenda which the Committee would recommend to the Conference should begin with the opening of the Conference, followed by the election of the President, the adoption of the agenda, and then the remaining items contained in the annex to document A/AC.159/L.60.

23. Mr. PLATIS (Greece) emphasized that the credentials of representatives to the Conference should be duly accepted before any substantive matters were taken up, including the adoption of the agenda.

24. Mr. AL-ALFI (Yemen), noting that the Conference would be guided by the procedures of the General Assembly, pointed out that while the General Assembly customarily convened in September, the process of accepting the credentials of representatives usually was not completed until late October or November. Unless the representative of Greece foresaw a specific problem with respect to the credentials issue, he felt that it would be appropriate to leave the relevant item in its current order in the Conference agenda.

25. Mr. JAYASINGHE (Sri Lanka) emphasized once again that the Committee should be guided by precedent with respect to the order of the items of the draft agenda. The agenda should definitely include a statement by the Secretary-General or his representative as a separate item, since the Conference was to be a United Nations conference.

26. Mr. SOTIROV (Bulgaria) agreed with the representative of Sri Lanka that a statement by the Secretary-General or his representative should be included as one of the agenda items. He endorsed the views of the representative of Greece regarding the rearrangement of the agenda items.

27. The CHAIRMAN said that the agenda could be annotated to reflect the Committee's understanding that a statement by the representative of Sri Lanka, a minute of silent prayer or meditation and a statement by the Secretary-General or his representative should be included in the opening of the Conference.

28. Mr. HAGOSS (Ethiopia) said that, while he had no objection to annotating the agenda, he cautioned once again against attempting to predetermine the order of items at the current stage. The normal practice should be followed, particularly since there was no substantive reason to do otherwise. With regard to the statement by the representative of Australia, it was his clear understanding that the Conference would be a United Nations conference.

29. Mr. AL-ALFI (Yemen) said that the Committee should proceed to endorse the first seven items in the annex to document A/AC.159/L.60 as the provisional agenda for the Conference, allowing precedent to determine the exact order in which they would appear.

30. Mr. SHA Zukang (China) endorsed the inclusion in the agenda of the first seven items in the annex to document A/AC.159/L.60, along with the proposal for a minute of silent prayer or meditation and a statement by the Secretary-General or his representative. A new document should be issued containing the draft agenda recommended by the Committee. He agreed that the precedent set by earlier conferences should be followed when establishing the order of the agenda items.

31. Ms. COURTNEY (Australia) said that it was premature to issue a new draft agenda. The Committee should first try to reach a consensus on all the items contained in the annex to document A/AC.159/L.60, with a view to producing a document enjoying the support of the Committee as a whole, rather than of one group of States only.

32. Mr. AL-ALFI (Yemen) saw no reason why the Committee could not issue a new document to reflect the progress it had made in its discussions; changes could always be made later if necessary. That was also true with respect to the rules of procedure.

33. Mr. MAHMOOD (Pakistan) agreed that a representative of the host country should open the Conference and that, to advance the Committee's work, an understanding should be reached on the other statements to be included as part of the opening ceremony.

34. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee might annotate the draft agenda to indicate that the opening of the Conference should comprise a statement by a representative of Sri Lanka, a minute of silent prayer or meditation, a statement by the Secretary-General or his representative, and possibly statements by representatives of regional groups. It would be left to the Conference itself to determine the order in which the statements would be made. He took it that the Committee wished to adopt that course of action.

35. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.